

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LIBRARY
ABILENE, KANSAS

EISENHOWER CENTENNIAL COMMISSION: Records, 1987-91
(a component of Record Group 220: Records of Temporary
Committees, Commissions and Boards)

Accession 91-16
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The records of Dwight D. Eisenhower were received from the National Archives in June 1991.

Linear feet:	2.4
Approximate number of pages:	4800
Approximate number of items:	2000

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Eisenhower Centennial Commission was a U.S. government commission which helped organize government activities commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of President Dwight D. Eisenhower in October 1990. Planning for the Eisenhower centennial had begun in the early 1980s by the Eisenhower Library and Eisenhower Foundation in Abilene, Kansas, the Eisenhower World Affairs Institute in Washington, DC, and various other organizations involved with Dwight D. Eisenhower. In 1986 Congress passed legislation creating a national commission to coordinate the centennial activities of the federal government. This legislation became Public Law 99-624 and was signed by President Reagan on November 7, 1986.

The enabling act created a Commission of 21 members. These included 14 members of Congress (7 from the House and 7 from the Senate), 6 public members appointed by the President, and the Archivist of the United States. Members of Congress selected for the Commission included Robert Dole and Pat Roberts who were from Kansas. Susan Eisenhower, who represented the Eisenhower family, was among those appointed by President Reagan. The members of the Commission were appointed in 1987 and the first meeting of the Commission was held on April 27, 1988. Senator Dole was elected chairman, and Bradley Patterson, a former member of the White House staff during the Eisenhower administration, was appointed Executive Director. Patterson served until February 1989 when he resigned and was succeeded by Jane Kratovil, who was executive director of the Eisenhower World Affairs Institute. Kratovil served until the Commission finished its work in late 1990. In early 1991 she transferred the records of the Commission to the National Archives, which later transferred them to the Eisenhower Library.

The main work of the Commission involved coordinating centennial activities of the federal government. Arrangements were made for a joint session of Congress on March 27, 1990, to honor Dwight D. Eisenhower. The Commission facilitated legislation that allowed the government to issue a commemorative coin and a commemorative stamp in 1990. Additional legislation helped to endow a series of scholarships in Eisenhower's honor. The Commission assisted the centennial activities of government agencies, including the Department of Transportation, which named a portion of the Interstate Highway System for Eisenhower, and the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, which had its origins during the Eisenhower administration. The Commission also cooperated with centennial organizations in Kansas and in Europe.

The records of the Eisenhower Centennial Commission consist largely of correspondence and reference files kept by the executive director. The material includes extensive information on the centennial activities of various organizations and government agencies in the U.S. and Europe. There are also copies of many articles about Dwight D. Eisenhower that were published during the centennial.

The collection contains very little information on the work of the Commission itself. The Commission held very few meetings and appears to have acted primarily as a coordinating body. The executive director, Jane Kratovil, operated out of her office at the Eisenhower World Affairs Institute, and utilized the Institute staff in her work for the Commission. The individual members of the Commission appear to have handled most of the work themselves. For example, the chairman, Senator Robert Dole, did most of the legislative work. More extensive information on the legislation sponsored by the Commission can probably be found among Dole's papers, which are at the University of Kansas.

Appointments to the Commission were made by the President and by Congressional leaders. More information on the creation of the Commission and the selection of its members can probably be found among the personal papers of the House and Senate leaders, and the White House Central Files at the Ronald Reagan and George Bush presidential libraries.

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Centennial Commission – Letters to the President

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Centennial Commission – Members, Appointments, etc. (1) (2)

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